

**PLUCKY PALOMINO
FARM & FOREST SCHOOL**

GRASSHOPPERS GARDEN CLUB

Family Handbook



AGES 7-11

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ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS



Program Philosophy

Grasshoppers transforms curious kids into knowledgeable young scientists through hands-on gardening experience, scientific exploration, and environmental stewardship. Our program emphasizes:

- Practical scientific method application
- Real-world data collection and analysis
- Environmental awareness and responsibility
- Leadership development and peer teaching
- STEM skill integration in garden activities

What Makes Grasshoppers Special?

Our program is designed specifically for the capabilities and interests of 7-11 year olds:

- Conducting real scientific experiments
- Using authentic scientific tools and methods
- Taking on leadership roles in garden planning
- Contributing to community projects
- Managing individual garden spaces
- Collecting and analyzing data

Program Overview

Age Group: 7-11 years old

Session Length: 3 hours

Season: March through October

Location: Tollgate Farm Barn
901 Bendigo Blvd N, North Bend, WA 98045



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Curriculum

Each week focuses on a new theme that aligns with the seasons and rhythms of life in the garden, such as "Plant Biology," "Soil Composition," and "Ecosystem Relationships." Activities include garden planning and design, sustainable growing methods, environmental stewardship, composting and soil building, seed to table connections and food preservation.

Sample Daily Schedule

Opening

- Scientific question of the day
- Tool and safety review
- Activity overview and team assignments

Main Investigation

- Hands-on experiments
- Data collection
- Garden maintenance
- Project work

Documentation

- Record observations
- Update data sheets
- Journal entries

Wrap-Up

- Share discoveries
- Review findings
- Plan next steps

Student Assessment & Communication

We observe and document each child's progress in physical, social, and emotional development. Family-teacher communication will be available through weekly updates.





MONTHLY THEMES

Our curriculum follows the growing season:

March: Garden Science Foundations

Soil science, Seed biology, Plant life cycles, Weather patterns

April: Garden Engineering

Garden design, Irrigation systems, Structure building, Tool science

May: Plant Science

Photosynthesis, Root systems, Plant classification, Companion planting

June: Garden Ecology

Beneficial insects, Pollinators, Soil food web, Ecosystems

July: Garden Management & Data

Growth measurements, Pest management, Water efficiency, Productivity tracking

August: Food Science

Plant chemistry, Preservation methods, Plant properties, Food systems

September: Garden Business & Research

Garden economics, Scientific research, Community engagement, Data analysis

October: Garden Legacy

Soil preparation, Documentation, Future planning, Knowledge sharing





PREPARING FOR THE DAY

Outdoor Clothing & Gear

Since we'll be outside rain or shine, it's essential to dress your child in layers and weather-appropriate clothing. Here's a list of recommended clothing and gear for a comfortable experience:

- Base Layer: Moisture-wicking layers (polyester or wool) in colder months to keep warmth in and wick moisture away from the skin.
- Mid Layer: Warm fleece or wool sweaters that provide insulation.
- Outer Layer: Waterproof, breathable rain jacket and pants to protect against wind and rain.
- Footwear: Waterproof boots with warm socks (preferably wool) for colder days, or comfortable, closed-toe shoes on dry days.
- Hat & Gloves: Warm hats that cover the ears and insulated, waterproof gloves for colder days.
- Sun Protection: Sun hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses on sunny days.

Please label all clothing and gear with your child's name to help prevent lost items.

Backpack Essentials

To support your child's comfort throughout the day, please pack a small backpack with the following items:

1. Water Bottle: Refillable and spill-proof, with enough water to stay hydrated.
2. Snack: Healthy, nut-free snack that's easy to eat. Please avoid sugar-heavy items to maintain energy levels.
3. Change of Clothes: Full change of weather-appropriate clothes, including socks.
4. Seasonal Gear: Sunscreen and insect repellent during warmer months.
5. Towel (optional): A small, quick-drying towel can be helpful on rainy days or for sitting on.





PREPARING FOR THE DAY

Daily Snack Guidelines

We'll have a designated snack time each session where children can enjoy their snack in a calm, group setting. Please pack a nutritious, nut-free snack such as:

- Fruit slices (apples, oranges)
- Veggie sticks
- Crackers or pretzels
- Cheese sticks
- Granola bars (nut-free)

Please avoid sugary snacks or candy.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Apply sunscreen and insect repellent before arriving. If you would like reapplication during the day, please provide labeled sunscreen and repellent and sign the appropriate permission forms.





PARENT PARTICIPATION & COMMUNICATION

Staying Connected

We send out a weekly email to provide updates and reminders and share photos. Check your inbox for updates on your child's experience and upcoming events.

Opportunities for Parent Involvement

We invite parents to volunteer for special activities. All volunteers must have a current background check on file and follow program safety protocols. We'll let you know via our weekly updates when we have upcoming volunteer opportunities available.

Parent Responsibilities

To help us provide a smooth and supportive experience for all children, please:

- **Arrive On Time:** Arrive promptly at the designated drop-off and pick-up times.
- **Pack Essentials:** Ensure your child's backpack has all necessary items, including snacks, water, and extra clothing.
- **Label Belongings:** Clearly label all items with your child's name.

Communicate Health Concerns:

Inform us of any relevant health or safety concerns, including recent illnesses or allergies.





SAFETY & SUPERVISION

Safety and Supervision

Your child's health and safety are our top priorities. To ensure a safe environment:

- **Handwashing:** We practice handwashing before and after snack time and after using the restroom.
- **Allergy Awareness:** We maintain a nut-free environment. If your child has specific allergies, please notify us in advance.
- **First Aid:** Our staff is trained in first aid and carries a kit with essentials for minor injuries.

Safety Procedures and Policies

Safety is a priority in our outdoor environment. Teachers carry a first aid kit, and all staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. Children will always be supervised, and teachers will conduct regular head counts.

Health Policies

Please keep your child home if they display symptoms of illness. For more information on our health policy, including guidelines for communicable diseases, refer to the Health Policy section.

Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency, we will contact you immediately. Our staff follows a detailed emergency plan, and parents will be notified of any health or safety incidents directly via their provided contact info.





ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

Enrollment Process

To enroll, complete the registration form and submit the required payment. After enrollment, you will receive further information regarding program details and parent orientations.

Attendance and Absences

Please notify us if your child will be absent. There are no make-up days for absences due to the structure of the program.

Weather Policy

We operate in various weather conditions, but in extreme weather (e.g., high winds, lightning), we may cancel or adjust activities. Notifications will be sent out in advance through the communication app.





BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE

Behavior Expectations

Our approach emphasizes respect for others and the environment. We encourage children to solve conflicts peacefully and will provide guidance when needed.

Emotional Safety

We support each child's emotional well-being and provide a safe, nurturing environment where they can freely explore and express themselves.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you need to reach us during program hours, please use the contact information provided in your registration packet. We will also communicate with you regularly through text and email for any updates, reminders, or special notices.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for joining our outdoor adventure and helping us nurture your child's curiosity and love for nature! We're excited to share the joy of exploring, learning, and growing in the forest and on the farm.



POLICIES

Safety Policy

At Plucky Palomino Farm & Forest School, we prioritize the safety of every child and strive to create a secure and supportive environment. Our safety policies include proactive measures, supervision practices, and detailed procedures to ensure the well-being of all participants.

1. Supervision

- All activities are supervised by trained instructors who maintain a low student-to-teacher ratio, allowing close monitoring of each child.
- Children are never left unsupervised. During exploration and free play, instructors are stationed strategically to maintain visual contact.
- Instructors conduct regular headcounts throughout each session, especially when transitioning between activities or locations.

2. Risk Management

- Instructors assess the safety of all equipment and natural spaces before activities begin, removing any hazards, such as broken branches, sharp objects, or unstable ground.
- Tools and equipment, such as gardening tools, are used only under adult supervision and after safety instructions are provided to children.
- Activities involving animals are led by instructors with experience in animal care, ensuring that children learn respectful and safe animal handling.

3. Boundaries and Rules

- Instructors establish clear boundaries and rules for each area of the farm and forest, ensuring children understand where they can safely explore.
- Children are taught and reminded regularly about respecting boundaries, using equipment safely, and following group instructions.



POLICIES

Health Policy

To ensure a healthy environment for all children, staff, and families, we maintain strict health standards and request cooperation with these guidelines.

1. Daily Health Check

- Parents are asked to conduct a health check at home, ensuring that their child is symptom-free before attending the program. Children with any symptoms of illness (fever, cough, rash, stomach issues, etc.) should remain at home until symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours without medication.
- If a child arrives with visible symptoms of illness, we may request that the child return home for the day.

2. On-Site Hygiene

- Handwashing is required before snack times, after restroom breaks, and after animal interactions.
- Instructors carry hand sanitizer and first aid kits, and children are taught handwashing practices using soap and water, especially after outdoor activities and before eating.

3. Infectious Disease Prevention

- Children diagnosed with a communicable disease (e.g., strep throat, conjunctivitis) should remain home until cleared by a healthcare provider.
- In the case of exposure to contagious illnesses, we will notify all parents while maintaining confidentiality. Families should inform us if their child has been exposed to or diagnosed with an infectious disease to support containment measures.

4. Medication Administration

- If your child requires medication during program hours, please inform us in advance and complete the required Medication Administration Form. Only essential medication (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens) will be administered, and instructors are trained to handle emergency medication.



POLICIES

Emergency Policy

Our emergency policy ensures a rapid and effective response to any incidents, prioritizing the safety and well-being of children in all situations.

1. Emergency Preparedness

- Instructors are certified in CPR and First Aid and receive training in emergency response protocols.
- Each group carries a fully stocked first aid kit, emergency contact information, a cell phone, and emergency medications for specific children (if applicable).
- Fire, severe weather, and evacuation drills are conducted regularly to familiarize children and staff with procedures.

2. Response to Injuries

- Minor Injuries: Instructors will administer first aid on-site for minor injuries, such as scrapes or bruises, and will notify parents of any incidents at the end of the day. For incidents that require additional attention, we will call parents immediately.
- Serious Injuries: In the event of a serious injury or medical emergency, we will contact 911 and provide emergency care until first responders arrive. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified immediately.

3. Evacuation Procedures

- If an evacuation is necessary due to fire, severe weather, or other environmental hazards, instructors will guide children to a predetermined safe location. Headcounts and attendance lists are used to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Parents will be notified as soon as the children are safely evacuated, with instructions on where to pick up their child.





POLICIES

Emergency Policy Continued

- **Missing Child Procedure**
 - If a child is unaccounted for during headcount checks, the instructor will immediately alert staff and conduct a search. Nearby staff will ensure the safety of other children while a search of the area is conducted.
 - If the child is not found within a short period, we will contact 911 and notify the child's parents immediately.
- **Severe Weather Policy**
 - The program will continue in most weather conditions, but sessions will be canceled or adjusted in cases of extreme weather, including high winds, lightning, or hazardous air quality.
 - Parents will be notified promptly of any schedule changes due to severe weather conditions.

These policies aim to ensure a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all children in our program, allowing them to explore, learn, and grow confidently in nature.

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